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The Inventory of King Henry VIII. Volume II: Textiles and Dress, ed. by Maria Hayward and Philip Ward (London: Harvey Miller, 2012). 366 pp., 41 b/w illus., 148 colour illus. EUR 140. ISBN 978-1-905375-42-4.

This is a remarkable book in what promises to be a remarkable series. In 1998, the Society of Antiquaries of London published the transcript of the Inventory drawn up after the death of Henry VIII in 1547. This was a list of the dead king's moveable goods, possessions which would pass to his son Edward VI. After a gap of many years, we now have the first volume in a series of commentaries on those inventoried goods and what they reflect of the court of Henry VIII. It is an extremely handsomely produced hardback, multi-authored, consisting of an introductory essay by Maria Hayward, followed by nine chapters on specialist subjects, each related to dress and textiles. Some sections perhaps will be of more immediate interest to readers of *Costume*. In chapter 2, Maria Hayward writes on the clothing of the king in his later years – he was 56 at his death – and what they reveal of his physical stature, his ill-health and his continuing need to project a regal, imposing figure. Her long familiarity with the operations of the wardrobe of the robes and the great wardrobe at this period, makes her the ideal guide to the clothing contents of the inventory and their contextual significance. There is also information on the cleaning, storage and transport of his clothing (Henry had some 55 residences by the time he died), on the clothing of his wives and son and on the accessories fashioned for his horses, dogs and hawks. In the following chapter Maria Hayward also looks back at the younger king and his engagement with sport and revels – this essay is prompted by the tents and pavilions that were inventoried. Tents might be functional or dressed to create an impression of splendour, with hangings and tapestries. They came in a variety of shapes and could be assembled to form a series of linked chambers that reflected the court's hierarchy of space and access. In this chapter there is also information on the

bards and bases used in jousts – the responsibility of the office of the revels – as well as account of the ephemeral costumes made for masking.

Santina Levey writes on embroidery and the king's broderers. Only about half a dozen pieces that can be identified with Henry VIII have survived to the present age and as the records of the Broderers company were destroyed in the Fire of London, this chapter works hard to provide a considerable amount of context and example in order to flesh out the picture. There is information on both skilled amateur and professional embroiderers, the kind of work undertaken, and a strong indication of the almost universal application of embroidery to clothing and furnishings at court, showing that English embroidery flourished over the course of Henry's reign. Santina Levey reminds us too that even royal wives were expected to sew their husband's shirts and that Queen Catharine continued to make Henry's shirts, even when preparations for her divorce had been set in motion.

Over two chapters, Lisa Monnas writes on the stores of sumptuous and extremely valuable textiles recorded in the inventory and on the vestments and furnishings employed in royal worship. The account of the textile stores is extremely informative, very well tabled and organised, including details of fabrics, quantities and values and also detail on the woven structure of the more complex textiles. The inventories tend to list the more valuable textiles, which were imported from Europe and held in reserve, the most expensive and prized being held in the King's secret store. Fabric of this value was guarded and its use carefully monitored. Missing from the inventory are the many simpler English manufactures, principally woollen cloth, which were more easily acquired on an ad hoc basis. Lisa Monnas also informs us of the huge quantity of fabric that had to be mobilised for the funeral of Henry VIII and gives a list of the liveries for each department of court for the Coronation of Edward VI in 1547, describing cloth, colour and quantity supplied. Henry's death and burial were separated by 18 days; the burial and coronation by a mere 3 days. An extraordinary

volume of tailoring and other textile work must have been achieved over these three weeks. In the chapter on royal worship, Lisa Monnas explains the difficulties of relating the inventory to the ecclesiastical garments and church furnishings in circulation at the time of Henry's death, showing examples that suggest their richness. While this chapter is about inventoried items, it necessarily moves beyond them (in some detail) to provide context: the complex arrangements for providing church services wherever the king was stationed, the mobilising of garments and altar fronts and other items of church furniture necessary for the presence of the king, such as screens and holyday closet furnishings – all of which had to be in appropriate colours for the particular period in the liturgical year. The king was conservative in matters of church ritual and even after the break with Rome and the Act of Supremacy, there was little difference in the form and richness of ceremony enacted.

In the short chapter on furs, Elspeth Veale discusses the range of animal skins which feature in the transactions of the court and the quantity of skins that would be needed to line and face a gown are indicated. It is clear from the costings that fur added hugely to the value of a gown, with flatter furs often providing the lining, while for show a facing of more expensive fur of similar colour was used. The most costly fur – sable – was restricted solely to the royal family by the sumptuary legislation of 1532. A single sable might cost as much as a yard of cloth of gold. There is discussion too of the decline in fashionability of fur over the period of Henry's reign. The medieval prestige associated with the wearing of furs was giving way to woven textiles of great complexity and richness - evidenced by the portraiture of this period and by the stocks of textile discussed by Lisa Monnas.

There is also a relatively short chapter by the late Donald King on the carpets and coverings for floor, table, cupboard, window seat. The Inventory lists some 800 carpets. Nearly 100 were great carpets – 4.5-10.5 metres long. Donald King reckons that around three-quarters of these 800 coverings were of eastern origin – of 'Turkey making'. This estimate includes a

number misattributed to ‘Venice making’ for there was no carpet industry in Venice, and they are likely to be knotted pile carpets from elsewhere, traded through Venice. Some of these were carpets bought by Cardinal Wolsey, whose goods were appropriated by the king. There is no indication in this chapter of surviving coverings that could be linked to Henry VIII, as is sometimes the case in other chapters. However the chapter does serve to remind us that carpets were desirable consumer goods, evidenced by their prominent display underfoot or on tables in many paintings of royalty.

In the section on linen – napkins, tablecloths, towels and sheets – David Mitchell writes that ‘the only table linen listed in the Inventory is a number of unused loom pieces in the secret and great wardrobes and quantities of old linen in the old jewel house.’ From this meagre information, the author expands the discussion to the structure of linen damasks, to the source of most of this fine linen and to the manner of its use at court. Patterns and imagery woven into the linen are also discussed, while the disappearance of once popular religious motifs is noted. The inventory does not account for the real volume of linen in circulation, as Mitchell explains. The author also shows how dining practices changed over the course of Henry’s reign, both at Henry’s personal table and more broadly, in the wider society.

No less important, indeed among the most splendid survivals from this period, are the tapestries. In the opening chapter, one of the most important in the book, Thomas Campbell points to the significance of Henry’s collection – over 2450 tapestry wall hangings at the time of his death, of which some 330 were the most costly hangings worked from wool, silk and gold thread. Some he inherited, but many important sets he actively acquired. Many of these tapestries were already dispersed at the time of the sale of royal goods of Charles 1, by which time half of the collection had been given away as gifts or as perquisites. Some of the most splendid tapestries were reserved for Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector and consequently have survived intact and remain in the royal collection. The author is keen to restate the

significance of tapestry as a princely commodity in Henry's reign, that it was a prized and expensive art form. At the highest levels of the craft, large tapestries worked with gold thread were the most exclusive items, affordable only to most powerful – the Vatican, Francis I, Charles V. Thomas Campbell is able to show what some of these lost tapestries looked like; some ended up in collections abroad, others existed as copies elsewhere. Time is the enemy of textiles, of course, and it is the work of Holbein, then a painter at Henry's court, on a salary of £30 per annum, which has survived and is now considered beyond price. Paintings did not have anything like the status of gold-thread tapestry in the sixteenth century. Campbell also shows how Henry tended to use tapestry as propaganda for his causes, selecting subjects or characters with which he could identify. He also discusses how the art form evolved over the course of Henry's life, from stately but rather static designs to a style which created greater spatial illusion and more dynamic figures. The book jacket illustration *The Sacrifice of Isaac* is a fine example of this.

The value of these commentaries is the knowledge brought to bear on the bald lists of the Inventory. The authors are able to provide a wealth of information on context – the sources of these goods, their place in the routines and practices of the Court, and their significance when measured against European courts. They show us how Henry's behaviour, actions, affections and physical condition are reflected in these goods. They are able to identify gaps in the inventory, drawing attention to objects not represented or under-represented in the lists – usually more everyday objects, made from wool or linen. Several of the authors also reference the inventories made for the sale of Charles I's possessions, mid seventeenth century, showing how much had survived until that point. Hardly any of the material listed and described now survives. It is an act of connection and identification with similar items elsewhere that only experts with this degree of specialist knowledge can achieve. Taken as a whole, the book does convey something of the complexity of the court and the performance

of kingship, showing how textiles and clothing were used to help bolster and magnify the monarch and his court, through luxurious and exclusive materials, through the skill of artisans, through the glorious tapestries and furnishings which helped place these creatures in settings of grandeur. But as Maria Hayward notes, quoting bishop Fisher's sermon, such splendour cannot take from them 'the condycyon of mortality'.

This is an important and valuable book and the Society of Antiquaries of London is to be commended for its support of this project. Credit should also be given to Philip Ward, the transcriber of the Inventory and co-editor of this volume. The book is most likely to find a home in university and museum libraries. Further volumes are planned – one on arms, armour and ordnance and one on the decorative arts.

DAVID WILCOX